



My name is Kristina Rasmussen. I am a Virginia resident, and I am also the proud granddaughter of dairy and corn farmers.

I speak to you today both as a taxpayer and a representative of the National Taxpayers Union, which is located in Alexandria, Virginia.

The National Taxpayers Union works for lower taxes, smaller government, and more accountability from elected officials at all levels. We are the largest and oldest grassroots taxpayer organization, and our 10,000 Virginia members include many farmers, ranchers, and rural residents.

As you formulate the 2007 Farm Bill, it's important to remember that government agricultural policy affects *all* Americans, including taxpayers, consumers, and small businesses as well as farmers and producers.

Since passage of the 2002 Farm Bill, direct payments have grown to more than \$20 billion per year – up from an average of \$9 billion in the early 1990s. Everyone in this room pays for these subsidies every time we send money to the IRS.

Furthermore, the richest 10% of farm-subsidy recipients gobble up almost 2/3 of all government payments, while the bottom 80% receive less than 1/5 of the total. Farm Bill policies are supposed to "preserve family farms," but they disproportionately channel money to big agribusiness.

No other country sells as much food abroad as America does, but we risk destroying our competitive advantage because of trade policies that invite other countries to raise barriers of their own against our farm products. That's especially tough on American farmers with specialty crops who could get a good price for their items in the global market.

When drafting the next Farm Bill, Congress must pay closer attention to the national interest, and that means the farmers, producers, workers, consumers, and small business owners who comprise America's taxpayers. Together, we can achieve legislation that unleashes the economic potential of farmers in a fiscally responsible way.